

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1160

As Reported by House Committee On:
Technology, Energy & Communications

Title: An act relating to the energy freedom program, including activities to promote green highways.

Brief Description: Addressing activities to promote green highways in the energy freedom program.

Sponsors: Representatives B. Sullivan, Linville, Morris, Hankins, P. Sullivan, Chase, Upthegrove, Dickerson, Lovick, Sells, Hudgins, Kenney, Ormsby, Schual-Berke, Simpson, Goodman, Springer, Kagi, Moeller, Green and Haler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Technology, Energy & Communications: 1/30/07, 2/16/07 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands the Energy Freedom Program to include assistance for landfill methane gas and wastewater treatment gas.
- Moves the Energy Freedom Program from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, ENERGY & COMMUNICATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; McCoy, Vice Chair; Crouse, Ranking Minority Member; McCune, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Eddy, Ericksen, Hankins, Hudgins, Hurst, Takko and VanDeWege.

Staff: Kara Durbin (786-7133).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In 2006, the Legislature created the \$17 million Energy Freedom Program (Program) within the Department of Agriculture. The purpose of the Program is to support projects that convert agricultural waste into energy. Five alternative energy projects (totaling \$10.25 million) were earmarked by the Legislature as part of the 2006 Supplemental Capital Budget. The remaining funds (\$6.75 million) were allocated according to a competitive loan process. Six projects were selected. Four loans were awarded to support oilseed processing for biodiesel, and the remaining two loans were awarded to support anaerobic digestion.

In addition to the Program, the Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6508 in 2006, which created minimum renewable fuel content requirements and fuel quality standards for biodiesel and ethanol.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Energy Freedom Program (Program) is moved from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. The Program is expanded to include assistance for landfill methane gas and wastewater treatment gas.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill moves the Energy Freedom Program (Program) from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. It expands the Program to include assistance for landfill methane gas and waste water treatment gas. The substitute removes the provisions of the bill related to grants and loans for alternative fuel refueling projects. It also removes the Green Energy Incentive Sub-account, and it removes the designations of I-5, I-82 and I-90 as "green highways."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill came out of my hydrogen highway concept that I've been working on over the interim. We learned that implementing hydrogen stations statewide is still about 50 years out and would be very expensive. Installing infrastructure for E85 motor fuel and biodiesel is less expensive. Tying these efforts into the Olympics would work nicely. The designation of the highways will highlight the availability of alternative fuel stations. These small grants will go to public entities to partner with private entities to get alternative fuel stations on the ground.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative B. Sullivan, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.